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HAYDEN IN WASHINGTON

Man Unafraid

CPYRGHT

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Of Our Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON, Feb. 11—

A top-of-column, front page headline in the New York Times last Sunday—"Donovan Guarded at Mail on Schools Threatens His Life"—referred to a new chapter in the career of a man long since famed for total disregard equally of physical danger and public opinion at home or abroad.

The current crisis for James B. Donovan, chairman of the New York city board of education, was a multitude of letters threatening assassination because of his virtually one-man official stand against a Negro boycott of the city's public schools. On that account, the Times said, a city police unit was guarding Donovan around the clock.

Before the school demonstration which kept 360,000 pupils and teachers at home Feb. 3, chairman Donovan had publicly declared that any teachers off the job not only would suffer salary deduction but a black mark as to record relating to promotion. And after the event, he called the walkout a "fizzle."

For Compromise

Donovan, who as school board chairman was appointed by neither Gov. Rockefeller, Republican, nor Mayor Wagner, Democrat, is backing a compromise plan for gradual shifting of students racially toward desegregation, rather than doing the job all at once. Specifically he declared:

"To order a child to attend a school far from his home solely on the grounds of race, creed or color, is alien to our way of life."

Notably New York City's school population still is predominantly white, 57 percent as compared with 43 percent non-white, the latter mainly Negroes and Puerto Ricans.

The surest thing in light of Donovan's past record seems to be that, so long as he lives, he will not budge an inch.

First public notice of him, peculiarly opprobrious, was when he appeared as counsel for the defense in the trial of Rudolph Ivanovich Abel, 59, charged with heading the whole Soviet Russian spy system throughout North America.

Abel was convicted of espionage and sentenced, Nov. 15, 1957, to three years in prison.

He was next heard of when very suddenly in February, 1962, it was announced that Abel had been released in exchange for Francis Gary Powers, pilot of the United States U-2 spy plane shot down over Russia in May, 1960.

Powers, a reserve captain in the U.S. Air Force, admittedly was serving as a civilian employe of the Central Intelligence Agency, the United States spy system.

While the Kennedy administration kept as far out of the transaction as possible, it was not long in development that Donovan had conceived the idea of exchanging Abel for Powers and won from atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy an agreement for exchange of the prisoners.

Possibly due to this spy exchange, but more as it appears on account of great unwillingness of any other New York Democrat to assume the job, Donovan was nominated for U.S. senator, to oppose the incumbent Republican, Jacob K. Javits.

Cuban Prisoners

A few days earlier it had become known that Donovan was negotiating with Fidel Castro for release of prisoners captured during the abortive invasion of the Cuban Bay of Pigs by forces admittedly organized and trained by the

Kennedy administration, although supported very little if at all by American arms.

On Dec. 21, some six weeks after he had been soundly trounced in the senatorial contest, with no sign of presidential support, Donovan actually accomplished landing in the United States of 1,113 of the Bay of Pigs captives. In exchange Donovan has arranged to pay Castro \$53 million in U.S. goods. Again Robert F. Kennedy had acted as go-between, although it was denied that U.S. taxpayer cash contributed to the deal.